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Executive Officer, I&SO

29 August 1952

Acting Chief, Security Division

Security Standards for Clearance of Applicants for Overt and Semi-Covert Positions

1. In connection with your inquiry dated 22 August 1952 there is indicated below information which you indicated would be of interest.

2. The standards covering I&SO determinations in connection with the suitability of applicants for employment in CIA are set forth in Paragraph B of CIA Regulation [REDACTED]. Under Paragraph D-1 there is a provision to the effect that CIA personnel must have held United States citizenship for at least five years and must have no member of their immediate family or next of kin subject to a foreign power.

3. For the purpose of determining eligibility, insofar as relatives or next of kin being subject to a foreign power is concerned, consideration is usually limited to the applicant's grandparents, parents, parents-in-law, spouse, brothers and sisters, and brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. (Half and step relatives are considered as having the full relationship.) This general rule, however, is flexible. The final determination is based upon the closeness of the relative or relatives, their present citizenship, and their present place of residence. Determinations as to whether or not exceptions to the Agency policy in this connection are granted are considerably influenced by the justification for the exception submitted by the operating office. No formula has ever been devised; instead, each case is considered as an individual matter. As an example, extreme need would have to be shown for the services of an individual whose brother is in a country under Communist domination, while only moderate need for the individual would be required if the applicant's mother is a British subject residing in this country.

4. Other standards called for are excellent character, unquestioned loyalty, unquestioned integrity, unquestioned discretion, unquestioned trustworthiness, and financial habits which would render unlikely the succumbing of the individual to financial pressure or offers of improper financial gain. Qualification under each of the above standards in the last analysis is a matter of individual judgment. In arriving at the determination the credibility of the informant, as well as the accuracy of the information reported is considered. The circumstances reported are further considered in connection with possible extenuating circumstances at the time of the event, the age of the individual at the time of the event, the amount of time that has elapsed since the reported incident, and the conduct of the individual since the time of the reported derogatory information.

5. Under the heading of "excellent character," the following items, among others, are considered: morals, drinking habits, associates, and criminal records.

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6. Under the heading of loyalty, we consider membership in subversive organizations, membership in Communist front organizations, membership in any organization designed to protect or to extend the interests of any group, national, fraternal, or economic in nature, where such interests conflict with the interests of the United States or whose interests and sympathies lie with foreign countries or groups.

7. Integrity, discretion and trustworthiness do not render themselves immediately to separate distinctions as to what constitutes an item to be considered under each separate heading. Items considered under this general heading would be such as loose talk, constant association with persons of unsavory character, financial dishonesty, drinking habits, repeated security violations in other sensitive jobs, etc.

8. In considering eligibility under that part of the criteria which relates to financial habits, it is pointed out that the amount of debts on the part of an individual is not as important as his approach to repaying those debts or indications that the person has a "price" at which he would lower his standards insofar as the other elements of the criteria discussed above are concerned.

9. At the present time we examine investigative reports, not only in the light of the above criteria, but also for information of interest to the Personnel Office and the Medical Staff. The information considered to be of value to the Personnel Office would include questions concerning the qualifications of the individual, service in previous positions, and the ability of the person to work for and with other individuals. This information is passed to the Personnel Office if it appears to be of a substantial nature. It is my feeling, however, that you should be advised of all cases which contain any derogatory comments of an administrative nature. This is believed necessary inasmuch as no criteria has been established by the Professional Selection Panel, and, until such time as more specific standards are developed, we will not be in a position to differentiate between cases which should be brought to your attention and those which contain derogatory administrative indications of such little consequence as not to be of interest to the Panel.

10. When it is determined that information obtained during an investigation may be of assistance to the Medical Staff, our present procedure provides for informal advice to be given to that Staff. Unless otherwise indicated, we will continue this practice.

11. The following proposed procedure is set forth as one believed to be workable. If it meets with your approval we will initiate it at such time as you indicate:


a. A 3x5 card be prepared on each case involving a new employee between grades 7 and 11. An indication will be made on this card as to whether or not the case contains administrative information of a derogatory nature but not sufficiently serious to warrant security disapproval. (For your convenience we would furnish a card on cases not containing derogatory administrative information.)

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b. The derogatory administrative information will be contained in the case summary if it is believed to be significant or true. The summary will indicate whether or not the information has already been passed to the Personnel Office or Medical Staff under the existing routine procedure. Derogatory administrative information of a more minor nature will be underlined in red on the investigation report.

12. The above can be implemented without materially increasing our workload. To prepare individual summaries in each case, would, of course, materially add to the workload of our organization. We will be pleased to implement such procedures as you deem necessary.

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